

Stewardship and sustainability message to campus community

Nov. 29, 2007, e-mail from Chancellor Brian Levin-Stankevich to all UW-Eau Claire students and employees

At the opening meeting of the academic year, I announced that I had signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. By signing this commitment, I affirmed UW-Eau Claire will set and attain specific sustainable energy and environmental goals.

Since that time, we have begun to undertake the specific requirements of the **Presidents Climate Commitment**, <http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/html/commitment.php>.

On Nov. 15, I submitted an initial report outlining the first steps we are taking as a campus, including the creation of institutional structures to guide the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to achieve climate neutrality. I have asked a group of faculty, staff and students for their counsel to help inform and guide this effort. The group held its first meeting Nov. 16 and has identified measuring our current "carbon footprint" as its initial goal.

Earlier this semester, I received a Clean Commute Initiative petition signed by more than 200 faculty and staff. This initiative asks the University Senate and administration to "take immediate action toward making UW-Eau Claire a model campus for clean commuting and to set an example for positive local change." The petition suggested that the university evaluate and implement infrastructure changes to promote non-car transportation options, and work directly with the greater Eau Claire community to integrate and coordinate clean commuting initiatives and efforts. The petition includes numerous specific suggestions and the Clean Commute group has identified a representative to work with administration to help prioritize and coordinate efforts.

I believe the Presidents Climate Commitment and Clean Commute Initiative should be incorporated into a comprehensive strategy to ensure we are acting as responsible stewards of this special place. As you may know, strategic planning Work Group 4, charged with identifying ways of enhancing the campus community, stated in its final report that "UW-Eau Claire's campus is widely admired for our beautiful natural surroundings. Campus decisions regarding energy, transportation and buildings should reflect a deep sense of respect for place."

Acting as responsible stewards must be infused into the way we operate. This approach, while incorporating specific initiatives, should not be limited by them — nor should everything we do be directed centrally.

I look forward to working with the campus community to realize this vision of stewardship and sustainability. I will keep you informed as we identify opportunities for greater personal involvement and as we identify and progress on our goals.